Crowdfunding Toolkit

Drover Impact is a crowdfunding platform, allowing donors to choose from a variety of campaigns created by students, faculty and administration. Your donation, small or large, empowers Drover success, learning, community engagement, innovation and creativity. Make an impact today with a campaign that inspires you!

How It Works

Application Process

Who can apply to use Drover Impact?
Current students, faculty, staff and alumni have the ability to use the platform. Groups who are selected to use Drover Impact must have a USAO Foundation fund for their campaign funds to go into. If you are unsure if your group has a fund, you can email give@usao.edu for assistance. Student groups and alumni must have a USAO employee sponsor. For alumni please contact the director of alumni development. For students, this could be your faculty advisor, coach, staff sponsor. If you are unsure who your sponsor would be, please email give@usao.edu for assistance

All campaigns will need at least three to five people identified to help make the campaign a success.

Campaign Principles
(view detailed info: see appendix 1)
- Time Commitment: 4-6 weeks planning, 30-45 days active execution, and stewardship (view suggested timeline: see appendix 2)
- Team Structure: 3-5 team members + ambassadors
- Strategic Goal Setting: Dollar or participation goals and overall campaign goals

All campaign teams are asked to complete a thorough application process. Start by reviewing the resources found in the How It Works section. Then fill out the Drover Impact application online. After your application has been submitted, it will be reviewed by the development office. You will be notified of acceptance or rejection within a week.

Note: In order to complete the Drover Impact application, you will need to identify at least 3-5 members of your campaign team.

Is my campaign eligible?

Gifts made on Drover Impact are treated as gifts to the USAO Foundation and they are tax-deductible. Gifts go through the USAO Foundation giving, gift processing, receipting, and recording protocols. Therefore, use of Drover Impact is restricted to campaigns that meet certain eligibility criteria.

- Gifts must go into a USAO Foundation fund. If you do not know what fund you are eligible to use, or if you need to set up a new fund, contact give@usao.edu
- Campaigns must have a USAO employee as a sponsor
- Funds raised must be used under the supervision of the sponsor. Campaigns raising money that will be passed along to other non-profits are not eligible to use Drover Impact at this time

Campaign Kick-off

Before you can begin a crowdfunding campaign using Drover Impact, the campaign leader will need to acknowledge that the full team is aware of the expectations of launching a crowdfunding campaign. This starts with a campaign kick-off meeting with the platform manager. At this meeting you will set a campaign goal, scope out a video plan, and get a basic understanding of next steps. Then, the team will be given access to the platform.

- Read, share, and understand the expectations of a successful campaign (see Campaign Principles appendix 1)
- Send platform manager basic campaign information — title, short description, fund number, and goal; this information should come from the application you filled out when applying

Gathering Assets

In addition to the basic campaign information, you will also need:

- Team member photos and bios
- Thank you message from the Campaign Lead
- Full description of your campaign, include visuals to break up the text
- Identify at least 5 giving levels with short descriptions
- Campaign images and video — must be hosted on YouTube

Video best practices

- Keep them short — 30-60 seconds
- Put the Who, What, and Why in the first 15-30 seconds
- Ask people to first give, and then to share with their networks
- Do not make them overproduced — successful videos can be shot on a smartphone camera with minimal editing
  - Overproduced videos could harm your campaign ("If the video looks so good, why do they need money?")

Communications Planning

The key to crowdfunding success is a solid communication plan, which includes email and social media. Your campaign team should have a communication plan and timeline at least two weeks before you intend to launch.

Pre-launch checklist
- Submit a communication plan outlining what will be sent during each week of the campaign (use appendix 3 for guidance)
- Recruit at least 10 individuals to act as campaign champions to help carry out the communication plan
- Submit a stewardship plan outlining how you will stay in touch with donors throughout the life of the campaign and 3-6 months after campaign completion
- Identify one person on your team to send timely thank-you updates throughout the campaign

Timeline and Campaign Launch
Drover Impact campaigns require a minimum of 4-6 weeks to plan and execute a successful campaign launch. Campaign teams that take the time to craft thoughtful messaging, create a compelling campaign video, and assign communication roles set themselves up to meet and surpass their crowdfunding goal. (See example timeline: appendix 2)

Assistance from University Advancement
Once your campaign has reached 30% of goal, it will be shared across university social media channels to help expand your reach and publicity.

Before you launch, the platform manager and other Advancement professionals may be able to help you brainstorm marketing channels and target audiences for your outreach. This will be discussed at the campaign kick-off meeting.

Successful crowdfunding campaigns have proven that email outreach is most effective at converting donations to your cause. To support your personal email outreach, please refer to the email templates (appendix 4) to help you with this important outreach.

Note: You will not be able to personally send emails using an Alumni contact list or past donor list pulled from USAO's database. Once your campaign has reached 30% of its goal, emails may be sent out directly from the Development office, upon the Development Director's discretion.

Best Practices

Matching-gift Opportunities
If a major donor is contacted and wishes to participate in a matching gift donation, you must contact USAO Development (give@usao.edu) for assistance to ensure that the match is handled appropriately.

Proper Collection of Drover Impact Donations
Because of rules related to the USAO Foundation non-profit status, personal and payment information must be managed properly. To this end, donations must be made through the Drover Impact platform's payment page by the donors themselves.

Checks may also be sent directly to USAO Development Office, Troutt Hall Room 110, 1727 W. Alabama Ave, Chickasha, OK 73018. The check memo line should include the name of the campaign the donor is supporting. These gifts will be entered as an offline gift by the platform manager.

Perks vs. Levels
When trying to crowdfund, one tactic to get donations is to utilize incentives. These are considered perks, and they are difficult to manage for non-professional fundraisers. We encourage campaign leads to avoid giveaways of tangible items because the value of the item must be deducted from the donation as per IRS rules.

> *Example: If someone gives $20 to a campaign with a perk of receiving a t-shirt valued at $7, the donor gets a tax receipt of $13. This cuts into the overall net gain of the crowdfunding effort and takes money away from the end dollar goal.*

We encourage instead to use Levels, where donations can be broken down into meaningful amounts that the donor can feel good about using.

> *Example: For a $20 donation, you can purchase on pair of shorts for a cross country runner. For a $100 donation, you can fill up the gas tank for the team's next out of state meet.*

Main Promotional Video
- Keep them short — 30-60 seconds
- Put the Who, What, and Why in the first 15-30 seconds
- Ask people to first give, and then to share with their networks
- Do not make them overproduced — successful videos can be shot on a smartphone camera with minimal editing

- Overproduced videos could harm your campaign ("If the video looks so good, why do they need money?")

Campaign Description

Here you are answering three questions:
- Who are we?
    - Keep it personal – introduce the department or group of people working on this particular campaign.
- Why are we raising this money?
    - State need
    - Feeling of urgency
- How can you help?
    - Give
    - Share

Use pictures to break up long chunks of text! You want this to be consumable.

Campaign Updates

Updates are a critical and underutilized form of stewardship and donor engagement. You must be committed to sending updates during AND after your campaign.

Updates should be something that enlightens, entertains, and engages the donor by:
- Showcasing your campaign's progress
- Featuring selected member's personal statements about what drew them to the issue you are trying to solve
- Sharing interesting facts or stories about the cause you are undertaking or issue you are tackling
- Providing special "VIP" or "behind-the-scenes" access to your process or training (i.e. featuring your classroom, practice regime, conference travels, etc.). Remember, the goal of all updates takes the donor along with you on your journey and entice them to share your mission with others who may find it compelling!

First Update (between 24 hours – 72 hours after launch)
- Thank donors, re-state impact their money is making
- Take compelling statistics around the issue you're raising money to tackle/solve or quotes from those who will benefit from the money raised
- Encourage donor to share with someone they know that would be interested in the campaign by describing a certain aspect of the campaign (a certain issue within your larger mission, connection as an alum of the school, etc.)

Milestone Update(s)
- Progress Milestone: note percentage of goal raised thus far (50%, 75%, etc.) and describe the impact that specific amount of money will have
- Countdown Milestone: include elements of money milestone update and note how much time you have left
- Using a short video, highlight someone that is either a face of the campaign discussing statistics about your issue or a testimonial from someone who will be impacted by the

money or someone who has been impacted previously (i.e., previous scholarship recipients)

Tools for Campaign Leads

Being the fundraising lead is an important and rewarding role. As the campaign team fundraising leader, you are the point of contact between the platform manager and your campaign team. In this role, you are responsible for overseeing campaign progress and submitting campaign requirements. The tasks associated with your Drover Impact campaign, such as writing campaign updates, creating a campaign video, or sending donor thank you notes, can be delegated to other team members but it is the sole responsibility of the fundraising lead to make sure these tasks are completed. We recommend meeting with your campaign team at least once per week throughout the process. You will be the point of contact for the platform manager for regular updates to check on progress and remind you of important due dates.

Here are some helpful tools to keep your campaign team on task and ensure success.
- Campaign Principles: appendix 1
- Suggested Timeline: appendix 2
- Communications Plan: appendix 3

Tools for Ambassadors

The campaign champions are volunteers who are committed to fundraising on behalf of the campaign. Each campaign champion should identify at least 10 personal contacts who might be interested in contributing to the campaign. Each ambassador is required to send at least six emails to their contact list during the month-long campaign, as well as utilize their social media networks. The emails and posts include:
1. Launch announcement: Campaign appeal
2. Early campaign update and request for support
3. Mid-campaign update and request for support
4. Final campaign update and request for support
5. Campaign summary and thank you

As a campaign champion you might also be called upon to support the campaign lead with other aspects of the campaign, such as writing campaign updates, appearing in a campaign video, or sending individual donor thank you notes.

Outreach Samples

There are many ways to spread the word about your Drover Impact campaign. Personal email outreach is by far the best way to reach people and offer them a convenient way to give to your campaign. Use email templates (appendix 4) for your outreach, making them as personal as possible wherever you can.

FAQs

What is crowdfunding?
Crowdfunding is the act of raising funds online from a large number of people for a specific project, cause, or campaign.

How does it work at USAO?
USAO Foundation has partnered with a company called Community Funded to create Drover Impact, which is the Foundation's official crowdfunding platform. Interested parties may submit an application to use the platform and, after being approved and creating their campaign page, can empower the USAO community to come together to support their cause.

Who can start a campaign on Drover Impact?
Any student, faculty, staff or alumni of USAO may submit an application to start a campaign on Drover Impact. All student and alumni campaigns require a USAO employee sponsor. There must be an active University Foundation account in order for the campaign to proceed.

What happens to a completed campaign on droverimact.usao.edu?
USAO Foundation reserves the right to "hide" or make invisible any campaign which has concluded. We reserve this right unconditionally and may, at any time, remove a campaign from any page on droverimpact.usao.edu. If you have already completed your campaign, and it is no longer visible on our page, then we have chosen to exercise our right to "hide" any past campaigns.

What is the minimum and maximum gifts allowed?
The minimum amount you may give to a single campaign is $5, but there is no upper limit.

Are contributions returned if a campaign does not reach its fundraising goal?
No, all funds are applied to the stated fundraising purpose. If a campaign becomes impractical or impossible to complete, funds will be used in the spirit of the original purpose of the campaign. Due to the charitable nature of gifts made to USAO Foundation, which is a tax-exempt institution, refunds are not permitted.

Are gifts tax-deductible?
All gifts made on Drover Impact are tax-deductible gifts to The USAO Foundation, which is a tax-exempt, charitable institution. The Foundation's tax ID is 73-1031040.

Additional questions, comments or concerns can be directed to the USAO Development office at 405-574-1393 or give@usao.edu.

Campaign Principles

To start a Drover Impact campaign, you have to understand the following:

Time Commitment
A Drover Impact campaign requires approximately 20 minutes of daily, active commitment. We've broken it down into three phases: quiet phase, active phase, and stewardship phase.
- **Quiet Phase** (4-6 weeks): Put team together, put together e-mail lists, set goal, create content. You should be spending an hour every day on this campaign, or an equivalent amount of time each week.
- **Active Phase** (30-45 days): Personal e-mails to your networks, advertising via blogs, social media, and affinity organizations. You should be spending an hour every day on this campaign, or that amount of time combined/per week.
- **Stewardship Phase** (3-6 months after, 9-12 months after): Thank you update, perk fulfillment (if applicable), impact updates.

Team Structure
- 1-2 campaign leaders
  - Main interface with platform manager
  - Put together solicitation list of approx. 100 people and e-mail them
  - Find other team members
  - Set goal with advising from platform manager
- 3-5 project collaborators
  - Responsible for specific pieces of content creation
  - Put together an additional list of approx. 100 potential supporters and e-mail them
- As many campaign champions as possible
  - The campaign champions are volunteers who are committed to fundraising on behalf of the campaign.
  - Put together an additional list of as many as possible potential supporters and email them (often around 50)

Strategic Goal Setting
- Set your goal based on the amount of money you CAN raise, rather than your budgetary deficit.
- The number of personal e-mails that will be sent out by your team members and campaign champion will give you an idea of how much you can raise. Each personal e-mail has a value of about $4. Therefore, if you have 1,000 e-mails, you can generally estimate a return of $4,000 and should set your goal at that point.

- If you hit your goal in the active phase, you can set a stretch goal and keep raising money. Start thinking about what your stretch goal will be in the quiet phase and keep in mind a few things:
    - Be realistic. Take into consideration how long it took you to get to your initial goal, how much time you have remaining in the campaign, and your additional outreach capabilities.
    - Explain the additional impact. In both an update and in the top portion of the campaign description, explain what the additional money raised will do. Make sure you keep this in line with what your campaign's stated purpose.
    - Do not change the game on your donors mid-campaign.
    - Do not update the goal amount in the campaign settings. Changing the goal amount will disrupt the momentum you have within that progress bar. By explaining the impact in your campaign description and updates, donors will understand the need for additional funds.
- If a higher goal is an absolute necessity, you should start thinking about larger gifts to make up approx. 70-80% of your overall goal and use the Drover Impact campaign to raise the additional 20-30%. Talk with your platform manager about the best approach for this scenario.
- Always remember: never start your active phase at $0. You want to have around 30% raised before you go live.
- Crowdfunding.io has a great tool to help evaluate goals.

Timeline
(appendix 2)

As a campaign manager for your Drover Impact project, you are expected to dedicate the time necessary to complete a successful campaign. Your team's success will largely be dependent on the time spent on the project. As your team is directly representing USAO as well as your own capabilities and professionalism, a high standard is required from all team members.

Time Requirements

Project Planning
The Quiet Phase (2-4 weeks prior to launch)

- Kick-off meeting with platform manager
- Define campaign
- Decide on goal amount and stretch goal strategy
- Compile e-mail lists (see appendix 4)
- Create marketing content and schedule (see appendix 3)
- Write basic copy for campaign and send to platform manager
- Send images for campaign to platform manager
- Send campaign introduction video to platform manager
- Send bios and pictures of all campaign team members to platform manager
- Review and approve campaign before it goes live!

At this point, 30% of your goal should be raised.

Project Launch
Active Phase (30-45 Days)

- Ensure open project link has been sent to all pre-committed donors
- Outreach to all other donors who have not previously committed
- Push marketing content through campaign champions
- Post text, photo and video updates
- Do a "final push" the last week of the campaign

Project Wrap-Up

- Post thank you update that includes progress and impact of donations
- Fulfill perks (if applicable)

Recommended post-completion actions

- Personally thank your donors
- Continue to update donors throughout the year on how money raised is being used (example: send video from conference where a research project that was funded by a campaign is being presented)

Communications Plan

Pre-Launch

Goals: **#1** Build a community of advocates. **#2** Reach 30% of goal in pre-commitments.

Ask Your Campaign Ambassadors

- Be a Campaign Ambassador (advocate)
- Please contribute early
- Please reach out to your network to share this campaign once live
- Provide them with boilerplate copy to share (emails, tweets, FB posts-see appendix 4)

Ask Early Supporters

- Please donate in the first 3 days
- Share Share Share!
- Stay tuned for updates!
- Provide them with boilerplate copy to share (emails, tweets, FB posts-see appendix 4)

Business & Organizations (work with Advancement professional to secure outside business support)

- Share the vision & impact of campaign
- Explain value to them (co-branding, high visibility philanthropy, marketing & new customers)
- Tell them what they can do: donate, sponsor rewards, matching donations, share with their networks
- Provide them with boilerplate copy to share (emails, tweets, FB posts-appendix 4)

Prep Marketing Plan

Goals: **#1** Schedule your posts to make life easier. **#2** Be prepared to communicate major milestones.

- Build email lists of potential supporters
- Create a Facebook event for your campaign's launch day and invite contacts
- Plan additional events/tactics

- Draft/schedule your communications

    - Pre-launch updates/emails/social
    - Launch Day (morning, afternoon & evening) update/email/social
    - 30, 50, 75, 90% etc. Emails/Update/Social
    - Final Push Updates/Emails/Social
        - 3, 2, 1 day(s) left
        - Final day (all day long!)
        - Campaign End (We did it!) Update/Emails

Live Campaign

Goals: #1 Execute your plan. #2 Stay active and engage your donors. #3 Turn supporters into advocates.

- Stay active (~20 minutes every day)
- Send scheduled communications
- Thank supporters as donations are made
- Create new updates with "behind the scenes" photographs and stories from the campaign team
- Respond to all comments on your page
- Rally supporters at the end!
- Focus on stretch goals after initial goals are passed!

Post Campaign

Goals: **#1** Thank Supporters. **#2** Demonstrate Impact. **#3** Tell supporters what to do next!

- Send victory/post campaign communication
- Rewards fulfilment
- 30 Day follow-up: Show impact
- Thank supporters and ask: "Please support other great campaigns on this platform!"

If you follow these steps, you'll having killer crowdfunding campaign communications!

Outreach Samples

<u>Pre-Launch Campaign Update</u>
Subject line ideas:
- We're rocking the world…in 3 days
- 72 hours until it all changes
- The countdown begins…

Hello [*Name*],
How's it going? [*personal story or connection*] (ex. How's it going? It was so great to see you at Connor's party the other night! I'm so glad to hear volleyball is going well. We should catch up soon.)

As you may know, I'm involved with [*campaign effort or organization*], which is [*description and reason for campaign*]. I would love for you to be a part of this. (ex. As you may know, I serve on a taskforce at USAO. Part of my role on the taskforce is to help stock the campus co-op, a food pantry our students can use to help combat food insecurities. We're about to launch a crowdfunding campaign to stock the pantry before Spring Break, and I would love for you to be a part of this.)

We are trying to raise $[*goal amount*] in [*campaign runtime*] because [*need or problem campaign solves*]. (ex. We are trying to raise $1,800 in 3 weeks to buy enough food for the students who remain on campus during the break. Our campus food services close during the break and many of students do not have funds or transportation to make a grocery run.)

[*Name*], I need your help in making this campaign successful…will you support us with a donation when it launches?

Another way you can help is to share our campaign with everyone in your network. If this is something that resonates with you, please share our story!

Please don't hesitate to contact me anytime if you have any questions, suggestions, or ideas!

I'll talk to you soon!
– [*Name*]
[campaign link]

Mid-Campaign Update

Subject line ideas:
- So excited to fill you in!
- Thank you! We couldn't be doing this without you.
- All the things have happened.

Hey everybody!

Thanks for all of your support for our [*campaign name and link*]! Everyone who has funded, shared, and gotten involved has been instrumental in our success thus far!

We want to keep you posted on what we have accomplished up to now:
We have raised [*% of goal since last email*]!

[*Supporting Images*]

Check out our first video update [*include link or embed video*]! You can monitor our progress through the "updates" tab on our campaign page!

Right now, we have [*days left in campaign*] and still need to raise $[*amount remaining*] out of our $[*goal amount*] goal so that we can [*campaign reason*].

We are very excited about this campaign! We are determined to meet and hope to even exceed our goal, but we can't do it without you. Please consider making a contribution and sharing our campaign [*include link*] with as many people as you can to help us get the rest of the way there.

We're doing this people! Thank you for everything!

Sincerely,
[*Name*]
[campaign link]

Final Update Before Campaign Ends

Subject line ideas:
- 1 day left!
- Tomorrow is it…we can do this!

Good Morning Everyone!

We have just one full day left in our campaign and we are overwhelmed by the generosity and excitement our community has shown. If you want to help us bring this awesome campaign to completion, now is the time! We are currently *$[amount remaining]* short of our *$[goal amount]* goal.

[OR]

We've surpassed our $*[goal amount]* by *[$x dollars]*. If we reach $*[stretch goal amount],* then we can [*stretch goal ideas]…*

As of right now, we have *[# of supporters]* supporters and that is absolutely awe-inspiring.

Please do what you can to help us reach our goal! Our campaign ends on *[end date]* at *[end time]*. Please share this with everyone you know and encourage them to pledge!

Thank you very much for everything that you've done!

Sincerely,
[Name]
[campaign link]

Social Media Sample Posts

- **Social Promotion** - these should be used heavily in pre-motional efforts an in the 1st week of the campaign.
    - o "Help us spread the word by sharing the story on your wall."
    - o "One of the best ways you can help is by posting our story and tagging three people that are also passionate out (theme)."

- **Progress Report** - these are most effective in weeks 2-4 of a 30-day campaign.
    - o "We've raised 50% of our goal! A few more gifts and we'll be 3/4 of the way to achieving (impact statement)."
    - o "We're excited to share that after the first week, we've already raised $(amount)! That means that (impact statement)."

- **New Content**
    - o "You all have given us great feedback over the last week and we're excited to share some new ideas we've created to incorporate your suggestions! First…"
    - o "With your incredible support, we've been challenged to add a new component to this opportunity. Without further ado…"

- **Reminder** - this is the most impactful update type. People *need* to be reminded and re-asked to engage. This can also look like a countdown of days remaining with a reminder to give.
  - "We have 1 week left! Please take a minute to click the link below and show your support by giving to the cause."
  - "We're down the final sprint; there are 12 hours left to give! We need your help to push us over the finish line. Click the link and join the adventure."

- **Answer Questions**
  - "We've been getting a lot of questions about (topic). Join us behind the scenes for an insider look…"
  - "You all have been great about providing feedback, let's take a few minutes to answer the most common questions we've been getting."

- **New Reward** - if rewards are offered, these are most helpful in the final week of the campaign's life.
  - "We're excited to announce that (local business) and offered to provide $25 gift cards to the first 5 people that claim this new reward. Get them while they last!"
  - "Thanks to your sharing, (generous donor) has graciously offered to match new gifts that are made between now and Friday."

- **Appreciation** - these should be happening on a regular basis while the campaign is live, as gifts are made, and then again at the close, to show the full impact of the support.
  - "Thank you for joining this adventure with us!"
  - "We're humbled and grateful to be a part of a community with such a passion for (theme)."